DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL
P.O. Box 942898
Sacramento, CA 94298-0001
(916) 657-7152
(800) 735-2929 (TT/TDD)
(800) 735-2922 (Voice)

May 24, 2002

File No.: 1.15426.051

To All State Employees:

Recently, it has come to our attention that an unknown individual or individuals may have illegally accessed a state data center which houses state employee files containing payroll deduction information (e.g., social security number). In an effort to provide for the security of each employee's information, the state has already taken steps to prevent any unauthorized access to all database systems.

At this time, there is no indication the information contained in the database was targeted or will be used for any unlawful purposes. However, to guard against the potential misuse of personal information, employees may want to consider taking the following precautions:

- Contact the fraud department of each of the three major credit bureaus. Notify them in writing that your personal information may have been compromised and request that a "fraud alert" be placed in your file, and a statement asking that creditors call you before opening any new accounts or changing existing accounts. The contact numbers and e-mail addresses for each of the three major credit bureaus are listed below:

    1. Equifax - 800-525-6285, *www.equifax.com*

    2. Experian - 888-397-3742, *www.experian.com*

    3. Transunion - 800-680-7289, *www.transunion.com*

- Contact the Social Security Number (SSN) Fraud Hotline (1-800-269-0271) and notify them that an unknown individual or individuals may have gained access to your SSN.

- Notify all of the financial institutions you use and advise them that your account information may have been accessed. Your financial institution(s) can provide further direction relative to any additional precautions you may desire to take to minimize the chance that your accounts might be illegally accessed. If you suspect that an identity thief has accessed your bank accounts, close the accounts immediately.

In addition to the precautions outlined above, employees who suspect that their personal

information has been used to commit fraud or theft should take the following actions:

- Contact the creditors for any accounts that have been tampered with or opened fraudulently. Creditors may include credit card companies, phone companies, other utilities, and banks or other lenders. Speak to someone in the security or fraud department of each creditor, and follow up with written notification.

- File a report with your local police department. In addition to reporting the crime, this will allow you to provide proof of the crime to your bank, or credit card companies. Many credit bureaus will only block the reporting of adverse information resulting from identity theft if the victim has filed a police report.

- Contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC works to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices and provides information to help consumers avoid them. The FTC will enter identity theft and other fraud-related complaints into a secure, online database, which is available to civil and criminal law enforcement agencies.

- Keep records of all your contacts and maintain copies of all correspondence.

Below is a list of resources which provide additional information on protecting yourself against fraud and identity theft:

- **Office of Privacy Protection:** *www.privacyprotection.ca.gov*
- **Privacy Rights Clearinghouse:** *www.privacyrights.org*
- **Federal Trade Commission:** *www.consumer.gov/idtheft*
- **U.S. Public Interest Research Group:** *pirg.org/consumer/index/htm*
- **Electronic Privacy Information Center:** *www.epic.org*
- **Jason Catlett's Junkbusters:** *www.junkbusters.com*
- **Privacy Journal published by Robert Ellis Smith:** *www.townonline.com/privacyjournal*
- **Privacy Times published by Evan Hendricks:** *www.privacytimes.com*

The state will take the necessary steps to protect the integrity of the database system. However, it is still incumbent upon every employee to take the appropriate precautions to ensure that there is no unauthorized use of personal information which may have already been accessed. Should you have any questions, please contact the California Highway Patrol at (916) 657-8290.

Sincerely,

D. O. HELMICK
Commissioner